

The Rose

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Summary: Charles Chandler worries about his daughter, only to leave her in good hands.

The Rose

"The Rose" **The Rose** by Lori Lum

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Verse 1.

Some say love, it is a river

> that drowns the tender reed.
 Some say love, it is a razor

> that leaves your soul to bleed.
 Some say love, it is a hunger,

> an endless aching need.
 I say love, it is a flower,

> and you it's only seed.* <p>

Charles Chandler held the umbrella in one hand and wrapped his other arm around his daughter. She leaned stiffly against him, her eyes staring blankly ahead. He wished she'd scream, yell, cry, or throw something. Just so she wasn't staring blankly into space.

The service ended and he sighed. He leaned over and gently kissed the top of Catherine's head as the others started to dissipate. Some came over to give their condolences; others shifted away quietly, giving him that meek, uncomfortable, "I'm sorry your wife died, that you now have to raise your young daughter alone, but I don't know what to say" look.

Warily, he and Catherine walked towards the car. The problem was he didn't know what to say, either. He felt like Cathy acted - that this was some terrible nightmare and that he'd wake up with Caroline there to comfort him and make everything all right.

He didn't want to go on. He didn't want to stand there at the wake as other people, mostly business acquaintances, told him how sorry they were and that the pain would get better in time. He didn't want the

pain to get better. He wanted Caroline not to be dead.

He looked over at Cathy, and gave a wan smile. He touched her knee to comfort her, and saw that his hand nearly enveloped the joint. Gods, he thought, she's too young to be without a mother. Who's going to know about slumber parties, makeup, boys, where to dab you perfume - all the things Caroline had been so good at?

The car door opened and Robert stood there in his neatly pressed suit, patiently, for them to get out. He numbly realized he hadn't even noticed the car was stopped.

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Verse 2.

It's the heart afraid of breaking
> that never learns to dance.
 It's the dream afraid of waking
> that never takes the chance.
 It's the one who won't be taken,
> who cannot seem to give,
 and the soul afraid of dyin'
> that never learns to live.* <p>

He looked at Cathy in disbelief. "Why? Catherine, why would you want to quit your job here - and all the money you're making just to do grunt work for the District Attorney's office?" His voice was incredulous. The Catherine Chandler before the accident would never have told him what this one just had. And even if she had, he would have taken it as a whim - something she'd do for a week or two before coming back to Chandler, Ross, & Carlyle.

But since she'd been back, she'd changed. Without so much as an explanation as to where she'd been, or who had stitched her face up so professionally, she'd come back irrevocably changed. Peter Alcott had assured her the sutures had been done by a professional, despite they obvious, swollen scars they'd leave. She'd payed less attention to her work, but not like this. He knew she was somewhat bored before. Now she seemed to have a purpose. He wanted to wish her luck, but couldn't quite bring himself to do it. He wished she'd talk to him, explain, instead of keeping this stony, stubborn silence.

"Because, Dad, I need to. I need some type of...purpose I can't find here." Her arms flailed a bit as she searched for words, but the set of her jaw showed Charles Chandler all too well that she wouldn't back down.

"Then for God's sake, Catherine, donate to charity. Lord knows you have enough money to spare," acerbic arrogance dripped from the man's voice.

Charles could tell immediately that had been the absolutely worst possible thing for Tom Gunther to say. And if Tom didn't, he rapidly caught on at the next words that came out of Catherine Chandler's well formed mouth.

"Because that's a cop out, Tom. And I'm tired of taking cop outs. Goodbye, Tom. Don't call."

She stomped out, slamming the door as she left. Both men stood aghast, jaws on the floor. Neither had seen her that mad. Neither had been on the receiving end of that side of her. And neither knew exactly how to respond.

Charles only hoped that she'd find her purpose.

And that she'd be able to talk with him if she needed.

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Verse 3.

When the night has been too lonely
> and the road has been too long,
 and you think that love is only

> for the lucky and the strong,
 just remember in the winter
> far beneath the winter snows
 lies the seed that with the sun's
love
> in the spring becomes the rose.* <p>

Catherine Chandler lay in bed, staring straight out into nothing.

Vincent hesitated at the chamber entrance before entering. In his hands he carried a tray, specially prepared by William, filled with foods they knew Catherine liked. He set it down on the nightstand.

"Catherine?"

She barely moved her head. Her voice was wispy and thin when she spoke, a mere shadow of the normally confident, strong voice.

"Hold me."

Vincent hesitated, then slowly walked around the bed. Awkwardly he climbed in beside her, and sidled up to her small body. Carefully, timidly, he held his hand over her hip, not quite touching it.

"Please."

The pain and need pregnant in that one word overcame his hesitation and he moved his body against hers, holding them in the spoon position. He moved his face back and forth against her hair. Having her so close, in so much pain, almost overwhelmed him. Slowly, he gathered himself.

He moved slightly so he could reach the tray. Tearing off a piece of bagel, he dipped it in a bowl of cream cheese and held it before her mouth. It seemed an eternity before she took it, but eventually, she did eat it.

He closed his eyes in thanks. It was the first piece of food she'd had in at least a day. It was a beginning, Vincent sighed. She allowed him to feed her, but only in the most removed, methodical way. But it was a beginning.

Charles Chandler moved up to the bed, and brushed the back of spectral fingers against Cathy's cheek. He then moved his gaze to the man laying against her. The gentle scene he'd just witnessed had brought him to tears - and left him with a sense of uneasiness.

A thousand questions ran through his mind. Two kept surfacing in the milieu. When had she met this...man? And why, oh why, hadn't she trusted her own father enough to tell him? The lion man cared deeply for her, you'd have to be six feet...well, even he could see it.

Charles Chandler watched over the next few days, as Vincent cared for his daughter. He listened in on Vincent's conversation with Father. He mulled. He worried. He wished she'd talk - to someone, even this man-lion Vincent. Especially this lion-man Vincent.

He sat on Cathy's bed. He lay on Cathy's floor. He mulled on Cathy's chair.

One night, he entered her dreams.

The next day, he watched her cry. In the arms of someone who cared for her. He watched this man listen, and dry her tears, and escort her home. Gently, patiently, with infinite care.

Charles Chandler then faded away. Knowing, to the depths of his soul, that she was in good hands. That there was at least one person that would accept her, unconditionally and without hesitation. He wasn't sure where the relationship was heading and it might face some challenges, but the gentle soul would be there for her. And he faded, knowing not everyone is so lucky.

* * *

> <p>Dedicated to all the Vincent's of this world...

><p>*lyrics to "The Rose" by Amanda McBrooom.<p>

Disclaimer/Notes: The characters from "Beauty and the Beast" belong to Ron Koslow, Republic Pictures, etc. I've used both them and "The Rose" lyrics without permission. This story is intended for personal enjoyment only. "Verse 2" take place during the pilot; "Verse 3" takes place during the episode where Cathy's father dies (sorry, I don't remember it's name).

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End
file.